In Class Writing Circle Activity

I use this activity to help students overcome anxiety about beginning a writing assignment and to help them plan for success. Goal setting and timed writing are good writing habits that students can use in any writing situation.

# Activity Description

## Before Class

I invite them to bring composing materials (laptop, iPad, pen and paper) and a draft of their working thesis and other exploratory assignments we’ve completed (reading responses, freewrites, etc.).

## During Class: Preparing To Write

We start class by talking about strategies for getting started. Usually, students will bring up freewriting, outlining, and mindmapping. I also recommend copying and pasting portions of exploratory assignments, including the thesis and/or other material we’ve worked on prior to the session.

I sometimes go over S.M.A.R.T. goals with students or some other goal setting strategy then give them a few minutes to craft a goal for our 30-minute drafting session. I give students examples and usually have 1-2 share so we can work together on making them more specific.

Students then share the goal with their base group (this is a group of students they sit with and who will be reading and reviewing their drafts).

## During Class: Writing Time

I set a timer for 15 minutes, check in briefly with students about how it’s going, and then set the timer for another 15 minutes.

Students share how it felt to write in the room for a set amount of time and what they accomplished with their base groups.

## End of Class Reflection and Goal Setting

As they leave, I ask students to set a goal about what comes next – when will they return to the draft? Where will they work on it? How long will they set a timer for? What’s one distraction they know they need to avoid?

By this time in the term, we will have already shared a lot about writing processes (quick surveys about snacks that help, music/no music, etc.).